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shackles and discuss social phenomena as such with all the simplicity and devotion with which he treats his pet organic idea at present, he will attain more satisfactory results.

SAMUEL McCUNE LINDSAY.

The Chances of Death, and Other Studies in Evolution. By KARL PEARSON, M. A., F. R. S., Professor of Applied Mathematics in University College, London, etc. Two volumes, with illustrations. Pp. 388 and 460. Price, \$8.00. London and New York: Edward Arnold, 1897.

The essays collected in these volumes embrace a wide variety of topics. The titles of the studies, which range from "Monte Carlo Roulette" to "Politics and Science" and to "Passion Plays," suggest the light and graceful touch of the man of letters rather than the severer labor of the man of science. One may seek in vain in the list of titles for plan, unity and connection. Indeed, so little has the author done to give his work the appearance of coherency, that one is disposed to assume an intuitional obscurity in this respect.

The bond of union between the various studies lies in the essential oneness of the mental attitude with which the author approaches the various subjects which receive his attention. The principle of evolution is the formula of interpretation, which, properly applied, enables us to reconstruct the world of the past, to understand the world of the present and even to catch glimpses of the future. Thus it is applied in these writings which so justify their title of studies in evolution. How much connection there should be between productions published together and launched into the world between the same covers, will probably always be in dispute. But it is recognized as reasonable that such productions shall reveal the author, with his mental traits, his habit of mind and thought. We expect such productions to show themselves fruits of the same soil. Despite the somewhat motley aspect of their outward garb and designation, the essays of Professor Pearson reveal a strong inner kinship which amply justifies their publication in the present form.

The studies included in these volumes are twelve in number. In "The Chances of Death" and in "Monte Carlo Roulette" the author discusses statistical probability with its relation to the evolutionary problem of variation. In "Reproductive Selection" and "Variation in Man and Woman" he deals with questions of physical anthropology. In the series of essays in the second volume, "Woman as a Witch," "Ashiepattle" and "Kindred Group Marriage," we have

a study of folk-lore and philology for the indications of the evolution of society from a primitive organization on the basis of mother right, while in the essay upon "Passion Plays" we are shown the gradual unfolding of the religious conceptions of the Middle Ages. Two essays, "Socialism and Natural Selection," and "Women and Labor," seek light upon the probable future development of the race from a consideration of present social conditions, while in "Politics and Science" and in "Reaction" we have a fierce polemic in support of the position of modern science against recent attacks upon its rationality. In summarizing the contents of the two volumes we have not held to the order in which the essays are printed, as it fails to reveal any principle of arrangement.

The studies included in these volumes are studies of human evolution. They are the application of the formulæ of the natural scientist to problems of social interest. The student will find in them forcible presentations in vigorous language of some of the current problems of research, which lie on the unsurveyed border-land between the sciences. Of the contents of the various studies it would be useless to speak in further detail. They are to the author, simply illustrations of the underlying principle of evolution. He is concerned less with the matter investigated than with the point of view. In enforcing and illustrating this mental attitude, which sees in evolution, in its mathematical, its biological and historical forms the key for the interpretation of all knowledge, lies the chief reason for the separate publication of these popular essays and papers. The object has been well accomplished, for the terse practical style of the essays cannot fail to retain the attention of the reader, while the contents must stimulate him to further study. The typographical excellence of the books makes reading easy, but it may debar the books from having so large a circulation as might be wished.

ROLAND P. FALKNER.

The General Property Tax. By CARL C. PLEHN, Ph. D. Pp. 79. Price, 50 cents. American Economic Association Studies, Vol. II, No. 3. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1897.

It is a commonplace of American financial science that the general property tax has proved a failure under modern conditions. Professor Plehn's essay is a demonstration of this fact in the particular instance of California. Having proved it for California he concludes, not without reason, that the condemnation of the tax applies equally well to other states. Of California he says, "In the first place she has